THE LINK CHURCH



ALTAR MINISTRY PLAYBOOK

Serving People. Honoring God. Protecting Every Encounter.

Purpose of the Altar Ministry

The altar is one of the most sacred places in the life of our church. It is where people surrender their lives to Christ, receive healing, seek restoration, confess sin, respond to the Holy Spirit, and experience God's presence. Our responsibility is not simply to pray for people. Our responsibility is to steward every altar experience with biblical integrity, spiritual sensitivity, compassion, excellence, and order. Everything we do should remove distractions so people can encounter Jesus.

Guiding Principle:

Spiritual power flows best through structured people.

The Heart of an Altar Worker

• People Before Process

Every person who walks to the altar has a story. Treat every person with dignity, patience, compassion, and respect.

• A Trauma-Informed Ministry

Being trauma-informed means recognizing that many people have experienced emotional, physical, spiritual, or psychological trauma that affects how they respond to prayer, touch, authority, or public ministry.

Never:

- → Force someone to speak.
- → Pressure someone to disclose personal information.
- → Touch someone carelessly or unnecessarily.
- → Minimize pain with statements like 'Just have more faith.'
- → Promise healing or outcomes God has not promised.

Instead:

- → Listen before speaking.
- → Pray with compassion.
- → Respect personal boundaries.
- → Allow silence when appropriate. Protect dignity.
- → Know when someone needs pastoral follow-up or professional counseling beyond the altar experience.

The altar should always be a place of healing, never additional harm.

• Our Altar Ministry Culture

- → We are not performers.
- → We are not spectators.
- → We are servants.
- → We do not chase emotional moments.
- → We faithfully care for people while trusting the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do.

Altar Ministry Ethics

Confidentiality

What is shared during prayer remains confidential except where someone's safety or the law requires reporting.

Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact should be respectful, appropriate, and ministry-focused. Ask permission whenever practical.

Ministry to the Opposite Sex

Whenever possible, sensitive ministry should be conducted by someone of the same gender.

Ministry to Children and Students

Never minister to a minor alone. Follow all church child protection policies.

Emotional and Mental Health

Not every struggle is spiritual warfare. Sometimes people need prayer, pastoral care, or professional counseling.

Altar Ministry Structure

Lead Altar Workers

- Ordained Pastors & Elders
- Licensed Ministers
- Sr. Intercessors

Lead Altar Workers provide all spiritual ministry during altar service.

Altar Support Workers

- Ushers
- Ministers in Training
- Intercessors in Training

Altar Support Workers provide all logistical, safety, and physical support during altar ministry.





Lead Altar Workers

Primary Assignment – Provide spiritual ministry

Responsibilities	Do Not
→ Pray with individuals. → Minister healing and encouragement. → Lead deliverance ministry when appropriate. → Lead salvation, rededication, and church membership invitations. → Exercise spiritual discernment. → Identify people needing additional pastoral care.	→ Direct traffic. → Manage lines. → Handle tissues or modesty sheets unless necessary. → Serve as primary catchers unless necessary.

Altar Support Workers

Primary Assignment – Support ministry by creating a safe, organized environment.

Responsibilities	Do Not
→ Manage crowd flow. → Guide people to prayer areas. → Maintain clear walkways. → Control lines. → Prevent overcrowding. → Serve as catchers. → Place modesty sheets. → Provide tissues. → Assist elderly individuals. → Watch for people waiting without prayer. → Alert Lead Workers when assistance is needed.	→ Lead prayer. → Lay hands on people. → Minister deliverance. → Lead salvation, rededication, or membership invitations.

Standard Altar Procedures

1. The altar invitation is given.
2. Lead Altar Workers move into ministry positions.
3. Altar Support Workers organize traffic and create space.
4. Every individual receives prayer.
5. Support Workers continually scan for safety and unmet needs.
6. Ministry continues until everyone has been served.

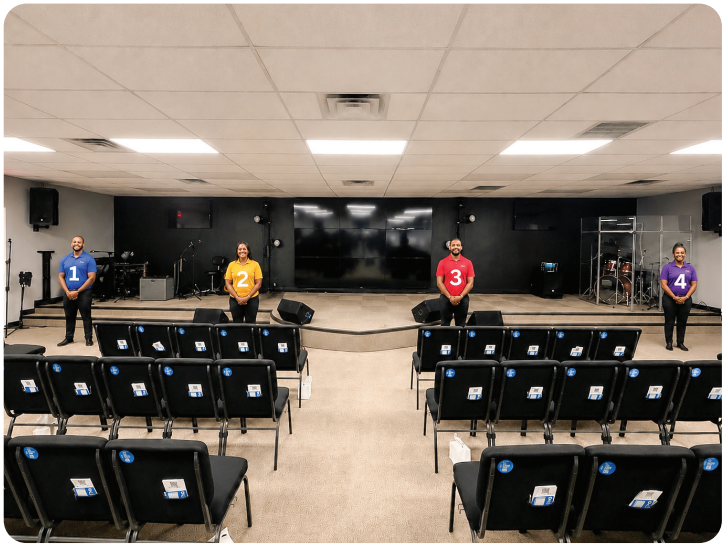
Altar Positioning & Assignments

Every altar worker is assigned a designated starting position in Services (Planning Center). Workers remain in their assigned position until the altar invitation is given or they are directed to move by the Lead Pastor or designated Altar Director. Position assignments provide structure but they do not limit ministry.

Lead Altar Worker Positions

Position 1 🔵
Front left side of the altar
Position 2 🟡
Left-center altar position
Position 3 🔴
Right-center altar position
Position 4 🟣
Front right side of the altar

Once the altar invitation is given, Lead Altar Workers fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the Lead Altar Workers section of this handbook.





Altar Support Worker Positions

When a mass altar response is initiated, all Altar Support Workers should immediately report to their assigned positions equipped with one modesty sheet and one box of tissue.

Position A 🟣
Front center left aisle
Position B 🔴
Front center aisle
Position C 🟡
Front center right aisle
Position D 🔵
Rear center left aisle
Position E 🟢
Rear center left aisle
Position F ⚫
Rear center aisle
Position G 🟤
Rear center right aisle

Once the altar invitation is given, Altar Support Workers fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the Altar Support Workers section of this handbook.

Special Ministry Situations



When Someone Falls

Support Workers secure the area, protect the person's head, place a modesty sheet, and allow Lead Workers to continue ministering.



When Someone Becomes Emotionally Overwhelmed

Remain calm, protect privacy, offer tissues, and avoid unnecessary attention.



Deliverance Ministry

Only trained Lead Altar Workers conduct deliverance ministry. Support Workers create space and maintain safety.

Common Altar Scenarios

A Full Altar Response

- **Lead Workers** spread out and pray.
- **Support Workers** organize the crowd, keep walkways clear, and identify people still waiting.

Multiple People Fall

- **Lead Workers** continue ministering.
- **Support Workers** protect heads, place sheets, and keep areas clear.

Someone Begins Crying

- **Lead Workers** slow down, listen, and pray.
- **Support Workers** offer tissues and privacy.

A Deliverance Situation

- **Experienced Lead Workers** take leadership.
- **Support Workers** create space and assist only when directed.

Salvation Response

- **Lead Workers** lead the person to Christ.
- **Support Workers** assist with next steps.

Rededication Response

- **Lead Workers** pray for restoration.
- **Support Workers** help with follow-up.

Church Membership Response

- **Lead Workers** celebrate and pray.
- **Support Workers** connect individuals to membership follow-up.

Someone Wants to Talk

- **Lead Workers** listen and determine follow-up.
- **Support Workers** maintain privacy and altar flow.

Medical Emergency

- **Lead Workers** stay calm. **Support Workers** notify the
- nurse on duty and clear the area.

The Altar Is Clearing

- **Lead Workers** ensure everyone has been served.
- **Support Workers** restore the altar and communicate follow-up needs.

End-of-Service Invitations

- **Lead Altar Workers** oversee all invitations for salvation, rededication, and church membership.
- **Support Workers** assist with direction, order, and follow-up.

Closing the Altar

No person should leave the altar without being acknowledged.

- **Lead Altar Workers** conclude ministry through prayer and encouragement.
- **Support Workers** restore the altar and communicate follow-up needs.

Crisis Ministry Guidelines

These guidelines help altar workers respond wisely, compassionately, and appropriately when someone presents a crisis at the altar. The altar provides immediate spiritual care and connection to appropriate next steps. It is not a substitute for emergency services or ongoing counseling.

Suicidal Thoughts or Self-Harm

☑ Do

- Stay calm and remain with the individual.
- Move to a private area with another approved leader present.
- Notify a pastor immediately.
- If there is immediate danger, contact emergency services.
- Do not leave the person alone until care has been transferred.

☒ Do Not

- Promise secrecy.
- Dismiss the statement.
- Attempt long-term counseling at the altar.

Threats to Harm Another Person

☑ Do

- Take every threat seriously.
- Notify the pastor immediately.
- If danger is imminent, contact emergency services.

☒ Do Not

- Ignore or minimize the threat.
- Handle the situation alone.

Domestic Abuse

☑ Do

- Listen without judgment.
- Notify the pastor privately.
- Provide appropriate referral resources.
- Follow legal reporting requirements when applicable.

☒ Do Not

- Tell the person to simply go home.
- Pressure immediate confrontation.

Crisis Ministry Guidelines

These guidelines help altar workers respond wisely, compassionately, and appropriately when someone presents a crisis at the altar. The altar provides immediate spiritual care and connection to appropriate next steps. It is not a substitute for emergency services or ongoing counseling.

Child Abuse or Neglect

☑ Do

- Notify the pastor immediately.
- Follow mandatory reporting laws and church policy.
- Document according to church procedures.

☒ Do Not

- Investigate the allegation yourself.
- Promise confidentiality.

Mental Health Crisis

☑ Do

- Speak calmly.
- Reduce stimulation.
- Notify leadership.
- Call emergency services if immediate danger exists.

☒ Do Not

- Assume every crisis is demonic.
- Argue with the individual.

Medical Emergency

☑ Do

- Call the designated nurse on duty or 911.
- Clear the area.
- Allow trained responders to provide care.
- Pray without interfering with treatment.

☒ Do Not

- Delay medical care.
- Move an injured person unnecessarily.

Notify the Pastor or Leader Immediately When

- Someone expresses suicidal thoughts or self-harm.
- A threat of violence is made.
- Abuse or neglect is disclosed.
- A medical emergency occurs.
- You are unsure how to proceed.

Guiding Principles

Protect life before continuing ministry.

Protect the dignity and privacy of every individual.

Stay within your training and assigned role.

Never promise confidentiality when safety or the law requires reporting.

When in doubt, involve pastoral leadership immediately.



The Altar Worker's Golden Rules



People are always more important than procedures.



Protect dignity at all times.



Pray with people, never perform for people.



Stay in your assigned role.



Every person deserves to be acknowledged.



One Lead Worker per person whenever possible.



Support Workers create order so Lead Workers can focus on ministry.



Never force conversation, touch, or emotional responses.



Listen more than you speak.



Never promise what God has not promised.



When in doubt, ask for help.



Protect confidentiality.



Stay calm when others become emotional.



Never leave a person unattended after beginning ministry unless another Lead Worker takes over.



Do not assume every problem is spiritual or every emotional response is deliverance.



Never draw unnecessary attention to someone's moment with God.



Maintain excellence from the first prayer to the last person.



Represent Jesus with humility, compassion, truth, and grace.



Altar Ministry Commitment

Every person who approaches the altar deserves to encounter the love of Christ in an atmosphere marked by truth, compassion, order, and excellence. We commit to serve with humility, protect every person's dignity, honor the work of the Holy Spirit, remain faithful to Scripture, and work together as one unified team so that every altar experience reflects the heart of Jesus Christ.

Our Altar Ministry Motto: We don't create encounters with God. We create an environment where people can encounter God. Everything we do should point people to Jesus.

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